



Dannel P. Malloy  
Governor

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING



Evonne M. Klein  
Commissioner

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS'  
AFFAIRS**

*March 3, 2016*

Evonne M. Klein, Commissioner  
Department of Housing

Good afternoon Senator Flexer, Representative Hennessy and members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. My name is Evonne Klein and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Housing (DOH). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to you regarding several important bills that impact DOH and the constituents we serve.

**DOH Opposes H.B. 5413 - AN ACT CONCERNING HOUSING FOR VETERANS AND ACTIVE  
DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL:**

The Department of Housing has made Connecticut's Veteran population a priority. We have set criteria for the creation of Veteran preference units in several of our competitive funding rounds, we provide Veterans with expedited security deposit guarantees, and have issued all 100 rental assistance certificates Governor Malloy made available last year for Veterans experiencing homelessness.

DOH is the key state agency overseeing the initiatives designed to prevent and end homelessness. We are a leader in the collaborative effort to ensure our Veterans experiencing homelessness are quickly identified, placed into interim housing when necessary and assisted with obtaining permanent housing within 90 days. This past year the State of Connecticut reached a major milestone when we were certified by the federal government as the first state in the nation to end chronic Veteran homelessness and the second state to effectively end all Veteran homelessness.

That being said, DOH cannot support HB 5413 given that it is redundant in light of existing efforts. This legislation requires the Housing Commissioner, in consultation with the Veterans' Affairs Commissioner, conduct a study to identify various programs and services offered throughout state agencies that can assist Veterans and active duty service members to find and secure affordable housing. DOH has already coordinated state and federal programs that provide Veterans with opportunities to obtain housing stability. This was part of the effort to effectively end Veteran homelessness, using state resources to leverage the vast array of existing federal resources. DOH is also part of the task force to Reimagine Rocky Hill and works closely with the DVA in this effort. It is our understanding that the Reimagining Rocky Hill task force will reconvene to discuss DVA programming and facilities once a capital assessment report is published this month further informing the effort.

The Department of Housing will continue to work with the State Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide outreach and information on all of the tools and resources available to acquire affordable housing in Connecticut. We have made great progress in the past several years to provide permanent, affordable housing to our Veterans and will continue with these efforts.

**DOH Opposes H.B. 5414 - AN ACT CONCERNING VETERANS HOUSING AND FEDERAL FUNDS:**

Housing Authority compliance concerns are monitored and overseen by the entity funding the activity or project. In the case of housing authorities related to this proposal that agency could either be the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA). It is the responsibility of the federal agency to monitor the operations or activities they fund, which would include ensuring compliance with rules and regulations set forth.

The Department of Housing does not have access to the contracts, records, policies, and financial documents that are held at the federal level. DOH also does not have the staff resources available to ensure compliance with a program that is not governed by the State of Connecticut.